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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, August 9, 1934.

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Hello folks. Last week at the close of my garden calendar talk, Mr. Teuton, who was doing the honors on that occasion, remarked that he thought that I was planning to attend some kind of a growers meeting at Toronto, Canada in the near future. The meeting that I am making plans to attend is the annual convention of the Vegetable Growers Association of America which will be held at Toronto, August 20 to 23. This association was formed in 1908 at Cleveland, Ohio by a group of vegetable growers of the Great Lakes region, and annual conventions have been held every year with the exception of one and this will be the 26th convention. It is a "growers" organization although its membership includes a considerable number of college and experiment station workers who keep the grower membership posted on the latest developments in scientific research, the results of which have to do with production problems.

Last year's convention was the first that I missed in many years, in fact, I served as secretary of the organization for a number of years and I hope to attend to convention this year and make up for what I missed last year. When these growers of fine vegetables from all over the country, east, west, north and south, all get together there are some lively discussions, and with it all a jolly good time. A few years ago the women got tired of attending the conventions and listening to the men talk shop so they formed an organization of their own. These annual conventions are about the only chance a lot of the gardeners have for a vacation but their four-day program is pretty well crowded with talks and discussions pertaining to the latest developments in vegetable growing and marketing.

There was a time, and not so many years ago, when market gardeners were clannish and many of them had what they considered superior methods of doing certain things and they guarded these as trade secrets. Perhaps it was a method of handling plants, or of applying fertilizers to a particular crop. Today vegetable growing is an open book, there are no longer "trade secrets" to be kept from fellow gardeners. A glance at the program of the Vegetable Growers convention at Toronto reveals the fact that over thirty topics are listed for discussion, many of these to be discussed by the growers themselves. Other reports and discussions are by the college and experiment station workers who are engaged in working out the problems of the growers.

If we were to review the progress made in fruit and vegetable production during the past 50 or 60 years we would find that these industries have kept pace with other lines of industry. Perhaps the greatest strides have been made in methods of transportation and storage, especially in the precooling and storage and of icing lettuce and other extremely perishable vegetables that are shipped across the continent to our eastern markets. The big mouth of the American nation is in the east; it centers in New York and other large eastern cities. The hand that feeds this mouth, as well as all the lesser mouths, is located all over the country, north, south, in the middle west and the far west, and in some degree in the east within truck

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hauling distance of the big markets. Transportation, and the preservation of the products during transportation, are vital factors in supplying the nations mouth with food,

There are other lines in which great progress has been made. Take the matter of insect and disease control; there is scarcely a year that does not bring some new insect or disease to harass and annoy the fruit and vegetable grower. When these pests appear, perhaps before they did any damage, the college and experiment station, also the federal workers are on the job discovering the best ways of protecting the various crops. Much of this work has taken the form of creating disease resistant strains and varieties. Take the cabbage-yellows disease for example, there is scarcely a place in the country today where cabbage has been grown for a long period of time that the yellows disease has not crept in. Now we have strains of practically every important commercial variety of cabbage that are immune to the yellows disease and will make good crops on land on which the disease has become established. The wilt disease of tomatoes is another good example and we now have varieties of tomatoes that will grow and ripen a crop on wilt infected land. Recently experimenters have found that the method of placing the fertilizer in relation to the root system of many crops has a decided influence upon the growth and yield of that crop. And so on, the trail of investigation never ends and new problems are constantly arising, considerable of which will be discussed at the Toronto convention of Vegetable growers the week of August 20th. But, I hope to be able to bring you a few of the choice tid-bits from the convention table of information on my return.